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(54) **Ultrasonic fuse-bonding sealing apparatus with improved contact surfaces.**

(57) An ultrasonic sealing apparatus is disclosed wherein a pair of sheet-like members or bottom portion of a tubular member is fuse-bonded together by frictional heat generated by the ultrasonic vibration. The apparatus includes horn (1) and anvil (2) means interposing members to be fuse-bonded together. The horn and anvil provide contact surfaces (3) in contact with the members to be fused. Each of the contact surfaces is formed with a plurality of grooves (4) to provide a plurality of protrusions (5). Each of the protrusions has a flat upper surface and slant side surfaces (6), so that the protrusion has a trapezoid cross-section. The horn means applies ultrasonic vibration to the fuse-bonding surface of the member to be fused in a direction oblique or parallel therewith in association with the anvil means.

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"ULTRASONIC FUSE-BONDING SEALING APPARATUS WITH IMPROVED CONTACT SURFACES"

This invention relates to an ultrasonic sealing apparatus for fuse-bonding sheet-like members formed of thermoplastic resin, and more particularly, to an improvement of horn and anvil means in such apparatus capable of fuse-bonding opposing sheets with frictional heat generated by the ultrasonic vibration.

Various types of ultrasonic sealing apparatus have been known in which a pair of sheet-like members are fuse-bonded together by means of ultrasonic vibration. Firstly, a vertical vibration type sealing apparatus has been proposed in which ultrasonic vibration is applied to the fuse-bonding surface in a direction perpendicular thereto. According to this apparatus, lateral displacement of the sheet-like members relative to the horn and anvil means can be eliminated, since the fuse-bonding surfaces of the sheets are subject to the vibration in a direction perpendicular to the surfaces. Therefore, it is unnecessary to provide embossing pattern on the sealing surfaces of the horn and anvil means for eliminating the lateral displacement. However, it is impossible to laterally remove or displace foreign materials adhered to the fuse-bonding surface of the sheets during vibration, due to the vibrating direction. Therefore, the vertical vibration type would not be available for fuse-bonding the bottom portion of a tubular container for containing therein cosmetic.

Secondly, lateral vibration type sealing apparatus have been proposed in which ultrasonic vibration is applied in a direction parallel with the fuse-bonding surfaces of the sheets. According to this type, foreign particles adhered to the fuse-bonding surfaces of the sheets can be removed in a lateral direction of the sheets because of the lateral vibration. However, lateral displacement of the sheets may occur with respect to the horn and anvil means due to the lateral vibration. This lateral displacement provides disadvantages in that ultrasonic vibration may not be efficiently transmitted to the fuse-bonded surfaces of the sheets, while the heat generation occurs at the horn means. Further, sufficient fuse-bonding may not be obtainable due to shortage of frictional heat during vibration, and furthermore, unpleasant high sound noise is generated due to the lateral displacement. Moreover, at the surfaces of the sheets in contact with horn and anvil means partial hangnail or shaved-cut tips may be generated.

In order to obviate the above-described problems attendant to the lateral-vibration type sealing apparatus, embossed pattern as shown in Figs. 12A and 12B is formed on the surfaces of the horn and anvil means at portions in direct contact with the sheets. Still however, the embossed pattern shown in Figs. 12A and 12B did not provide satisfactory result.

Thirdly, oblique vibration type sealing apparatus have been proposed in which ultrasonic vibration is applied to the fuse-bonding surfaces of the sheets in an oblique direction with respect to the surfaces as described in Japanese patent application provisional publication Nos. 58-33424 (1983), and 58-205723 (1983). According to this type, ultrasonic vibrations is dispersed into both vertical and lateral directions with respect to the fuse-bonding surface, so that the oblique type provides advantages those seen in vertical and lateral vibration type sealing apparatus. That is, in the oblique vibration type sealing apparatus, foreign materials adhered to the fuse-bonding surfaces of the sheets can be removed in lateral direction of the sheets, and simultaneously, lateral displacement of the sheets relative to the horn and anvil can be prevented to some extent. Therefore, fuse-bonding is achievable at higher-efficiency in the oblique type rather than vertical or lateral vibration types. Accordingly, the oblique vibration type sealing apparatus is also available for fuse-bonding at least two multiple layer sheets together, such bonding being insufficient in lateral vibration type apparatus.

However, lateral displacement of the sheets cannot be completely eliminated still in the latter type, and the displacement occurs even by the formation of the embossed pattern as shown in Figs. 12A and 12B at the contact surfaces of the horn and anvil. Therefore, further improvement on fuse-bonding has been required by way of highly efficient transmission of the ultrasonic vibration to the surfaces to be fuse-bonded.

Transmission efficiency of the ultrasonic vibration in the lateral or oblique vibration type sealing apparatus is determinative by the shape of projection pattern to be embossed at the horn and anvil surfaces which support the sheets. In this case, attention should be drawn to the following aspects:

- a) The horn and/or anvil should provide maximum area in contact with the fuse-bonding surfaces in a direction parallel therewith so as to generate frictional heat maximally at the fuse-bonding surfaces; and
- b) The embossed pattern should provide sufficient thrust or bite with respect to the fuse-bonding surfaces so as to eliminate displacement of the latter relative to the horn and anvil.

Regarding aspect (a), maximum contact area in a direction parallel with the fuse-bonding surfaces is obtainable, if embossed pattern is not formed on the horn and anvil. However, in this case, lateral displacement of the sheets is excessively promoted. On the other hand, regarding aspect (b), tip end of the projection pattern should be formed in acute angle. However, in this case, there is no contact area in a direction parallel with the fuse-bonding surfaces, to thereby degrade transmission of the ultrasonic vibration to the fuse-bonding surfaces, so that frictional heat is hardly generated. Apparently, these are contradictory requirements between the aspects (a) and (b).

As a matter of example, referring to the conventional embossed pattern shown in Figs. 12A and 12B, projection 5 each having rectangular flat contact face are defined by the formation of obliquely oriented diagonal groove 4 intersecting with one another. The projection 5 has upright surfaces 41 directed perpendicular to the contact surface with the structure, each of the projections 5 does not easily bit into the fuse-bonding surfaces, so that lateral displacement of the sheets is not completely avoidable.

Further, U.S. patent 3,468,731 appears to show embossed pattern having a construction similar to that shown in Figs. 12A and 12B. In Fig. 4 of the U.S. patent, a knurled area is provided at a sealing surface. However, the knurling serves to increase the localized sealing pressure and simultaneously provides a most pleasing apparatus of the sealed area (see column 3 lines 71 to 74 of the above-mentioned U.S. patent). Such structure also does not surely prevent the sheets from lateral displacement, as in the case shown in Figs. 12A and 12B.

Furthermore, Japanese utility model application provisional publication 60-201928 (1985) shows a horn 1 in which a plurality of grooves and ridges 42 extend in a longitudinal direction of the contact surface as shown in Figs. 13A to 13C. The grooves have constant depth along their length, and the ridges have contact height along their length with their tops being chamfered. As shown in Fig. 13C, cross-sectional shape at the contact surface 3 of the horn 1 has a continuous sinusoidal curve in lateral direction of the contact surface 3. However, this publication pertains to a vertical vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus as is apparent from Fig. 13A in which ultrasonic vibrating direction is along axial direction of the horn 1, and the contact surface 3 is formed at the distal end of the horn. For this it is understood that vibration is applied to the fuse-bonding surfaces of the sheets in a direction perpendicular thereto. Accordingly, these ridges 42 are not formed for the purpose of preventing the lateral displacement of the sheets, but are formed for the purpose of guiding resin melted by the frictional heat attendant ultrasonic vibration into the grooved area at the sealing portion, to thereby hold the molten resin in that area, to thus enhance fuse-bonding performance. Even if such structure shown in Figs. 13A through 13C is applied to the lateral or oblique vibration type sealing apparatus, sufficient frictional heat may not be generated, since no contact surfaces directed in parallel with the fuse-bonding surfaces are acknowledgeable in the ridge zone 42 having sinusoidal cross-section, and such ridge zone 42 may not sufficiently prevent the lateral displacement of the sheets due to insufficient biting of the ridge zone 42 into the fuse-bonding surfaces.

Conventional ultrasonic sealing apparatus still provides drawbacks in another stand point of view. In case of sealing the bottom portion of a tubular member by the employment of the conventional apparatus a clamp means 20 so called "Jaw" is required as shown in Figs. 15 and 16 for clamping a container 17 prior to clamping the bottom portion of the container 17 by a horn and an anvil. The clamp means 20 includes a frame member 21 in which a slide member 22 is slidably disposed. The slide member 22 is urged by a spring 23 so as to clamp a bottom of a container 17 by the frame member 21 and the slide member 22 with the aid of biasing force of the spring 23. A pair of guide plates 24 extend obliquely and downwardly from the bottom portions of the frame 21 and the slide member 22, so that cylindrical tubular container 17 is introduced into a space defined between the frame 21 and the slider 22 to be flattened by the guide plates 24.

The above-described clamp means 20 is required so as to hold the members to be fuse-bonded, since complete fuse-bonding may not be carried out in the conventional sealing apparatus. Such clamp means 20 therefore serves as the supplemental to complete fusing-bonding. Further the clamp means 20 also prevents molten resin generated at fuse-bonding surfaces during ultrasonic vibration from entering inside the tubular container 17, since the clamp means 20 clamps the bottom portion of the container at the position below the fuse-bonding surfaces (see Fig. 14).

On the contrary, the disposal of the clamp means 20 leads to another disadvantages.

Firstly, molten resin is accumulated between a space defined between a portion clamped by the clamp means 20 and a portion clamped by the horn 1 and anvil 2 (see Fig. 14). Therefore, a bulged portion 25 is disadvantageously provided at this space as shown in Figs. 17A and 17B, to thereby degrade external appearance.

Secondly, such clamp means renders the production line complicated. To be more specific, the conventional sealing apparatus as shown in Fig. 14 includes the clamp means 20, a feed-in conveyor 31 adapted to transfer non-fused-bonded tubular container 17, a turntable 32 adapted to mount a plurality of the clamp means 20 at its outer peripheral end portion, a horn, an anvil 2 those being positioned at one side of the turntable 32, and a feed-out conveyor 33 adapted to take-up a tubular container subjected to fuse-bonding by the horn 1 and the anvil 2. Container holders 34 are respectively provided on these feed-in and feed-out conveyors 31 and 33 so as to supply the container 17 to the clamp means 20 or receive the container therefrom. Each of the holders 34 also provides liftable mechanism for that purpose.

If the clamp means 20 is eliminated, the container holder 34 having liftable mechanism and the turntable 32 can also be eliminated, and further, a single conveyor can perform both feed-in and feed-out functions. As a result, compact and simplified production line may be provided, if the clamp means 20 can be eliminated.

The present invention has been developed in order to remove the above-described drawbacks inherent in the conventional sealing apparatus.

It is, therefore, an object of the present invention to provide new and useful ultrasonic vibration sealing apparatus of lateral or oblique vibration types.

Another object of the present invention is to provide such apparatus capable of providing effective transmission of ultrasonic vibration to the sheets to be fuse-bonded so as to obtain firm and stabilized fuse-bonding.

Still another object of this invention is to provide such apparatus capable of providing sufficient contact area in a direction parallel with the fuse-bonding surfaces of the sheet, yet providing sufficient biting of the contact area in to the sheets.

Still another object of the invention is to provide such apparatus capable of eliminating clamp means which conventionally supplements fuse-bonding, to thereby provide resultant apparatus in simple and compact construction.

These and other objects of the present invention will be obtained by an improvement of projection pattern formed in a horn and/or an anvil those being provided in the above-mentioned lateral or oblique vibration type sealing apparatus. Throughout various R & D, the present inventors have found that effective fuse-bonding is only achievable in case of the lateral or oblique vibration type apparatus by providing the shape of the projection pattern as shown in Fig. 11C, which is the intermediary configuration between those shown in Fig. 11A and Fig. 11B in order to obtain, at the horn and anvil, sufficient contact area in a direction parallel with the fuse-bonding surfaces of the sheet, yet providing sufficient thrust or bite of the projections into the sheets. Fig. 11A shows the configuration wherein larger parallel area result by the elimination of the projections, and Fig. 11B shows the configuration wherein largest biting of the projections result because of the accurate tip of the projections.

The intermediary arrangement shown in Fig. 11C provides both respective advantages derived from Figs. 11A and 11B.

Further, elimination of the clamp means is attained in the present invention by providing sufficient fuse-bonding of the sheets because of the improvement of embossed or projection pattern at the contact surface of the horn and anvil. If the fuse-bonding strength is improved, it is unnecessary to further clamp the member to be sealed by the clamp means. This requirement can also be attained by the improved projection pattern. Therefore, the above-mentioned technical objects can be simultaneously solved by the improvement of the projection pattern at the surface of the horn and anvil.

According to the present invention, in the lateral or oblique vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus in which a pair of sheet-like members are clamped by a horn and an anvil, and clamped sheets are fuse-bonded together by frictional heat caused by the ultrasonic vibration, the horn and anvil surfaces in contact with the pair of sheets are formed with novel projection pattern.

The pattern is characterized by the shape of the projection defined by a flat upper surface and slant side surface. Therefore, each of the projections has a trapezoidal cross-section. Such projections can be provided by forming grooves on that contact surface, the grooves having trapezoidal cross-section.

These trapezoidal projections can easily bite into the sheets, to thereby prevent the sheets from lateral displacement, to thus generate friction heat at high efficiency because of stabilized transmission of ultrasonic vibration to the fuse-bonding surfaces. As a result, firm and stable fuse-bonding is achievable.

Accordingly, multiple layer sheets can also be fuse-bonded together, such multiple layer sheets being considered to be impossible to render fuse-bonding together by the conventional ultrasonic fuse-bonding apparatus. In particular, this invention is also available for fuse-bonding the multiple sheets which interpose therein a sheet of ethylene-vinyl alcohol copolymers, such as known as "EVAL" (trademark), as an intermediate layer.

Further, in the present invention, heat generation at the horn can be reduced, since the ultrasonic vibration is transmitted to the sheets at no loss, so that cooling of the horn is not severely required, and high-speed fuse-bonding is continuously achievable.

Furthermore, unpleasant noise can be reduced because of the reduction of lateral displacement of the members to be sealed, so that satisfactory working condition is realized.

Furthermore, because of the elimination of the lateral displacement, no peeling or shave-off tips is generated at the sheet-like surfaces clamped by the horn and the anvil, so that resultant product has excellent external appearance.

Furthermore, the projections has trapezoidal cross-section, so that undesirable sticking of the sheet-like member to the horn and anvil can be reduced in minimum level. Therefore, the sheets thrust by the projections can easily be removed from the projection pattern, upon completion of fuse-bonding. As a result, no cutting occur in the sheets during peeling.

Furthermore, conventionally, various types of sealing apparatus should selectively be used such as heat-seal, high frequency seal, and ultrasonic seal apparatus in conformance with various types of materials for the members to be sealed. On the other hand, the present invention can eliminate such selection because of the employment of the horn and the anvil in accordance with the present invention, and can perform desirable sealing or fuse-bonding by the single ultrasonic sealing apparatus regardless of the variation of the materials for sealed member.

The present invention is also available for fuse-bonding the bottom of a container formed of thermoplastic resin. That is, the horn and the anvil according to the present invention clamp the container bottom, and perform fuse-bonding at this portion with frictional heat caused by ultrasonic vibration. The projections formed on the horn and anvil surfaces in contact with the container bottom are of trapezoidal shape in cross-section, in which flat top face and slant side faces define the trapezoidal shape, so that the container bottom can be positioned between the horn and the anvil when these are opened.

Therefore, additional clamping means can be eliminated to thereby render the entire apparatus to be simplified.

In accordance with the present invention there is provided an ultrasonic sealing apparatus for fuse-bonding together with a pair of sheet-like members by frictional heat generated by ultrasonic vibration comprising: horn means, having a contact surface in contact with one of the sheet-like members; and anvil means having a contact surface in contact with the other sheet-like member, the anvil means being in confrontation with the horn means, the contact surfaces of the horn and anvil means being formed with grooves to provide a plurality of protrusions, each of the protrusions having flat upper surface and slant side surfaces, so that each of the protrusions has trapezoid shape in cross-section.

In accordance with the present invention there also is provided an ultrasonic sealing apparatus for fuse-bonding a bottom portion of a tubular container formed of thermoplastic resin, the fuse-bonding being made by frictional heat generated by ultrasonic vibration, comprising: horn means having a contact surface in contact with the bottom portion; anvil means having a contact surface in contact with the bottom portion, the bottom portion being held between the horn and anvil means, and a position of the anvil means being displaceable relative to the horn means, the contact surface of the horn and anvil means being formed with grooves to provide a plurality of protrusions, each of the protrusions having flat upper surface and slant side surfaces so that each of the protrusions has trapezoid shape in cross-section; and conveyor means adopted to position the bottom portion between the horn and anvil means when these are opened.

The object and features of the present invention will become more readily apparent from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1A is a front view showing projection pattern formed at a horn according to a first embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 1B is a cross-sectional view taken along a line I - I of Fig. 1A;

Fig. 2 is a front view showing a horn and an anvil used in an oblique vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus according to this invention;

Fig. 3 is a front view showing the oblique vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus according to the invention;

Fig. 4A is a schematic view showing a process for sealing a bottom portion of a tubular container;

Fig. 4B is a cross-sectional view showing biting or thrusting state of the projection into fuse-bonding sheets;

Fig. 5 is a front view showing a lateral vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus according to the invention;

Fig. 6 is a front view showing a horn and anvil used in the apparatus shown in Fig. 5;

Figs. 7 to 10 are front views showing projection patterns according to other embodiments of the invention;

Figs. 11A-11C are explanatory cross-sectional views showing a concept of the configuration of the projection according to the invention;

5 Fig. 12A is a front view showing a conventional projection pattern;

Fig. 12B is a cross-sectional view taken along the line XII - XII of Fig. 12A;

Figs. 13A to 13C show another example of a conventional horn and its surface in contact with a member to be fuse-bonded;

Fig. 14 is a front view showing a conventional oblique vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus;

10 Fig. 15 is a view partly cross-sectioned showing a clamp means used in the conventional apparatus of Fig. 14;

Fig. 16 is a schematic view showing the clamp means; and

Figs. 17A and 17B show undesirable sealing provided by the embodiment of the clamp means shown in Figs. 15 and 16.

15 The same or corresponding parts and elements are designated at like reference numerals throughout the drawings.

The present invention will be described with reference to accompanying drawings.

Referring first to Figs. 1A and 1B, shown is projection pattern formed on respective contact surfaces 3 of a horn 1 and an anvil 2. As shown in Fig. 1B, protrusions 5 are provided by forming grooves 4 on the surface of the horn 1. Each of the protrusions 5 has slant surfaces 6 directed at an angle θ with respect to the line normal to the contact surface 3. The angle θ is in a range of from 5° to 45°, and preferably from 10° to 30°, the angle being determined in this range in accordance with the material of the sheets to be fuse-bonded.

The grooves 4 extend linearly and are intersected with one another. Alternatively, the grooves 4 may be bent or meandered. According to the former case, protrusions 5 having rectangular or triangular shape can be formed with continuous pattern as shown in Figs. 7 and 8. In the latter case, zig-zag or corrugated projection pattern are formed in the horn or anvil surface. Alternatively, hexagonal protrusions 5 (Fig. 1A), octagonal protrusions 5 (Fig. 9) or circular projections 5 (Fig. 10) are continuously formed.

Pattern pitch l as shown in Fig. 1B defined by a distance between one end of the protrusion 5 and one end of neighbouring projection 5 be in a range of from 0.5 to 2.0 mm, and preferably 0.8 to 1.6 mm. This range is determined on the basis of requirements such as maximization of frictional heat generation, minimization of sealing period, and the required least pressing force attained by the horn 1 and the anvil 2. Incidentally, size and shape of the protrusions at the horn 1 can be different from those at the anvil 2.

Further, it is necessary to remain planes directed in parallel with the fuse-bonding surface in order to provide sufficient frictional force. For example, in case of honeycomb type pattern as shown in Fig. 1A, ratio of area of the grooves 4 to the upper surface area of the projections is in a range of from 30:70 to 64:36, and preferably, approximately 40:60.

With respect to the depth of grooves 4 which provide protrusions 5, if the depth is too large in case of fuse-bonding the thermoplastic sheets together, protrusions 5 excessively advance into the sheets, to thereby reduce the thickness of the sheets at their fuse bonding portions, so that sheets may be penetrated by the protrusions at the portions. Further, volume of the grooves becomes large to excessively allow molten resin to flow into the grooves. Upon solidification of such resin, external appearance at the sealing portion is degraded. On the other hand, if the grooves 4 are too shallow, sheet lateral displacement may occur relative to the horn and anvil due to insufficient thrust of the protrusions 5 into the sheets. As a result, frictional heat generating efficiency may be lowered at the fuse-bonding surface. Therefore, depth of the grooves should be in a range of from 35 to 65% of the thickness of one of the sheets, and preferably from 40 to 60%. The depth of the grooves at the horn 1 should not necessarily be the same as that of the grooves at the anvil 2, but the depths can be different from each other.

The sheet-like members to be fuse-bonded by the ultrasonic sealing apparatus according to the invention are selected from the group of thermoplastic resin single layer sheet, thermoplastic resin multi-layer sheets, or other multi-layer sheets consisting of a thermoplastic resin layer and a sheet formed of paper or aluminum those not being formed of thermoplastic resin. Such members are available for fuse-bonding bottoms of tubular containers for containing therein a cosmetic or toothpaste.

Regarding multi-layer sheets formed of thermoplastic resin which are applied to the tubular container, the container has inner and outer layers formed of high density polyethylene (HDPE), and low density polyethylene (LDPE), respectively. Alternatively, an intermediate resin layer having gas barrier properties such as "EVAL" (trademark) and nylon is interposed between HDPE and LDPE.

Regarding multi-layer sheets formed of different kinds of materials, an aluminum lamination layer is interposed between the inner and outer layers.

According to the present invention, since the side surface 6 of the protrusions 5 are of slant surfaces in the contacting surfaces of the horn 1 and the anvil 2, the protrusions 5 readily bite into the sheet-like members. Particularly, in case of fuse-bonding multi-layer sheets together, protrusions 5 can thrust into the inner layer which are fuse-bonding surfaces as shown in Fig. 4A, by the optimum selection of height of the protrusions 5, i.e. depth of the grooves 4, since the protrusions 5 of the invention can deeply thrust into the sheets. As a result, ultrasonic vibration is sufficiently transmitted to the fuse-bonding surfaces for generation of frictional heat at high efficiency. If the protrusions 5 do not completely penetrate the outer layer, the ultrasonic vibration is not directly transmitted to the inner layer, but is transmitted thereto by way of the outer layer. During this transmission from the outer to inner layers, the ultrasonic vibration is attenuated, and therefore sufficient frictional heat generation may not be attainable. In particular, in case of fuse-bonding the bottom of multi-layer tube which includes a layer of "EVAL" (trademark) between inner and outer layers formed of polyethylene, fuse-bonding may not be sufficiently achievable by the conventional apparatus whose protrusions do not bite into the inner layers, since the polyethylene layer is not adhered to the "EVAL" layer due to their resin properties. On the other hand, according to the present invention, desirable fuse-bonding results, since protrusions 5 can bite into the inner layers of the opposing sheets.

Further, since each of the grooves 4 has trapezoid cross-section, the sheet members penetrating into the grooves 4 can be easily peeled from the protrusion pattern. That is, the cross-sectional area of the tip end of the protrusion is smaller than that of the bottom portion thereof. Reversely, cross-sectional area of the groove bottom is smaller than that of groove top.

Furthermore, in case the grooves 4 do not have straight line pattern but have bending pattern, resin melted by the ultrasonic vibration is uniformly distributed along the bending grooves 4. Therefore, uniform fuse-bonding is achievable along the fuse-bonding area, and stabilized and firm bonding results. This effect is particularly acknowledgable in case of honeycomb protrusion pattern shown in Fig. 1A. On the contrary, in case of the projection pattern having straight groove pattern, molten resin may flow in one way direction. Fuse-bonding is obtainable more uniformly in case of bending groove pattern (Figs. 1, 9 and 10) rather than straight groove pattern (Figs. 7 and 8).

Moreover, in the invention, top surfaces of the protrusions are directed in parallel with the fuse-bonding surfaces, so that sufficient frictional heat can be provided.

Furthermore, when oblique vibration type sealing apparatus is used in which ultrasonic vibration is applied to the sheets in a direction oblique to the fuse-bonding surfaces so as to fuse-bond the bottom of the tubular container, even if materials filled in the container is adhered to the fuse-bonding surfaces, the adhered material can be splashed out of the fuse-bonding surface. In the present invention, such splashing is effectively performed because of the employment of specific projection shape having slanting side faces 6 at the contact surfaces 3 of the horn 1 and the anvil 2, since lateral displacement can be reduced. Accordingly, fuse-bonding is achievable with interposing cosmetic material between the fuse-bonding surfaces, and further, sufficient sealing at the container bottom is achievable even if the container is filled with cosmetic liquid.

Next, a sealing apparatus according to the invention will be described.

Referring first to an oblique vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus, as shown in Fig. 3, a support arm 12 is provided rotatable about a tip end of a supporting stem 11. On the support arm 12, an oscillator 13, an amplifier 14 and a horn 1 are coaxially mounted. Ultrasonic vibration is directed in axial direction of the oscillator, amplifier and the horn. The horn 1 has a tip end portion whose both sides are formed with a pair of contact surfaces 3. The contact surface 3 is oriented at an angle of from 5° to 40° with respect to the axial direction of the horn 1. Preferably, the angle be approximately 20°.

An anvil 2 is disposed adjacent to the horn 1. The horn 1 and the anvil 2 are retractably provided so as to control the distance therebetween. Alternatively, the horn 1 is stationarily disposed whereas the anvil 2 is disposed retractably. Reversely, the anvil 2 is stationarily disposed while the horn 1 is retractably provided so as to control the distance. The best mode resides in the retraction and extension of the anvil 2 in terms of mechanical simplification. For this, hydraulic cylinder is used to drive the anvil 2. Further, horn 1 should be fixedly secured to the arm 12 in such a manner that the contact surfaces 3 of the horn extend vertically.

The anvil 2 can be retractably disposed in such a manner that the contact surface 3 of the anvil 2 is spaced away from the contact surface 3 of the horn 1 so as to make the distance therebetween larger than a diameter of the tubular container 17 having maximum size in operation, when the anvil 2 is at the retracted position. However, in light of the positional adjustment during fuse-bonding operation, the distance should be smaller than the diameter of the tubular container 17. Preferably, the distance be from 5 to 15 mm.

If the distance between the contact surfaces 3 of the horn 1 and the anvil 2 is larger than the diameter of the tubular container 17, the container 17 is brought into a position between the horn 1 and the anvil 2, and is held thereby for fuse-bonding. On the other hand, if the distance is smaller than the diameter of the tubular container 17, guide members 18 are required at the respective side of the horn 1 and the anvil 2 so as to allow the container 17 to enter a space between the horn and the anvil with accompanying the deflection of the container as shown in Fig. 4A. The guide members 18 are provided with guide surfaces 19 having tapered or convex configurations for flattening the container end.

With this structure, the tubular container 17 is introduced into the space defined between the horn 1 and the anvil 2 through the guide members 18, and the container is temporarily stopped, for fuse bonding. Upon completion of the bonding, a conveyor 15 positioned below the horn 1 and the anvil 2 receives and feed out thus bonded container 17 as shown in Fig. 13. The conveyor 15 is adapted to feed the container 17 into and out of the horn and the anvil, from one side thereof to the other. Therefore, the conveyor 15 may be installed to have a linear travel. Further, holders 16 are mounted on the conveyor 15 at equidistance with one another for supporting inversely the tubular containers 17.

Turning to a lateral vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus wherein ultrasonic vibration is applied in a direction parallel with the fuse-bonding surfaces, an oscillator 13, an amplifier 14 and a horn 1 are coaxially and vertically supported by a support arm 12. Further, the horn 1 has contact surfaces 3 at both sides thereof which extend parallel with the vertical axis. Remaining components are identical with those described with reference to the oblique vibration type. Ultrasonic vibration directed in the axial direction of the horn 1 is applied in parallelism to the fuse-bonding surface of the tubular container 17 through the contact surface 3.

According to the present invention, sealing at the bottom of the tubular container is sufficiently conducted in comparison with the conventional apparatus because of the improvement in protrusion pattern formed on the contact surfaces of the horn and the anvil. Therefore, clamp means required in the conventional apparatus can be eliminated, to thus simplify the resultant system construction and sealing process. Further, it becomes unnecessary to provide lifting mechanism to the holder for elevating and lowering the holder which supports the container. Therefore, resultant apparatus can be provided at reduced cost and the apparatus can be installed in a small reduced space.

Table 1 below shows sealing strength at the bottoms of the tubular containers formed of various types of materials, employing oblique and lateral vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus. In this case, used were the horn and anvil having honeycomb projection pattern shown in Figs. 1A and 1B formed at the contact surfaces 3. As a matter of comparison, another horn and anvil were prepared each, having conventional rectangular projection pattern shown in Fig. 12 at the contact surfaces thereof. Pattern pitch l was 1.1 mm and area ratio of grooves 4 to the upper flat surfaces of the projections 5 was 41:59, and the groove depth was 0.2 mm. Side faces of each of the projection were directed at an angle of 20° with respect to the plane directed normal to the contact surfaces in case of honeycomb type projection pattern.

Ultrasonic vibration frequency was 20 kHz with an output of 1.8 kW.

TABLE 1 (Sealing Condition)

5	Materials of Tubular Container	Oblique Vibration		Lateral Vibration	
		Honey- comb (Fig.1)	Rectan- gular (Fig.12) Prior Art	Honey- comb (Fig.1)	Rectan- gular (Fig.12) Prior Art
	Outer - - Fuse-bond Surface (Thickness μm)				
10	LDPE (Single Layer) (360)	Excel- lent	Excel- lent	Good	Poor
	MDPE (Single Layer) (400)	Excel- lent	Excel- lent	Good	Poor
15	LDPE/nylon/Multi- layer PP (170)/(60)/(170)	Excel- lent	Poor	Poor	Poor
	LDPE/HDPE (150)/(300)	Excel- lent	Poor	Poor	Poor
20	LDPE/"EVAL"/MDPE (170)/(60)/(170)	Excel- lent	Poor	Poor	Poor
	LDPE/LDPE/AL/PE/LDPE (250)/(90)/(12)/(12)/ (80)	Excel- lent	Excel- lent	Good	Good
25	LDPE/AL/LDPE/paper/ LDPE (200)/(12)/(90)/(20)/ (80)	Excel- lent	Excel- lent	Good	Good
30	LDPE/LDPE (Dual Tube) (380)/(380)	Excel- lent	Poor	Poor	Poor

Note: LDPE: low density polyethylene
 MDPE: medium density polyethylene
 HDPE: high density polyethylene
 PP: polypropylene
 AL: aluminum

As is apparent from Table 1, sufficient seal was attained in case of the honeycomb protrusion pattern in comparison with the conventional type. In particular, quite excellent sealings were acknowledged in case of the honeycomb type used in the oblique vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus. Further, since side faces of the projections are slantingly formed, sufficient biting of the protrusion into the sheets resulted, and unpleasant frictional noise occurred at reduced level, and tubes were easily peeled from the projected pattern after sealing.

Further experiments were conducted to investigate advantages obtainable by the employment of the honeycomb projection patterns using the oblique vibration type ultrasonic sealing apparatus. The test results are shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Material of Tubular Container Outer - - Fuse- bonding Surface	Tube Diameter (mm)	Anvil Pressure (kg/cm ²)	Fuse- bonding (second)	Sealing Strength (kg)
LDPE (Single Layer)	22	8	0.35	100
MDPE (Single Layer)	22	8	0.35	100
LDPE/nylon/PP (Multi-layers)	25	10	0.58	78
LDPE/HDPE	25	10	0.56	100
LDPE/"EVAL"/MDPE	25	10	0.55	93
LDPE/LDPE/AL/PE/LDPE	30	8	0.58	100
LDPE/AL/LDPE/paper/ LDPE	30	8	0.60	100
LDPE/LDPE (Dual Tube)	40	14	0.55	100

Sealing strength was measured using tensile-compression tester in which pressure speed was 100 mm/min, and pressure applying surface area had a diameter of 60 mm.

As is apparent from Table 2, fuse-bonding can be made in a short period of time, and high sealing strength is obtainable when combining the oblique-type vibration ultrasonic sealing apparatus with the honeycomb protrusions 5. The present invention, thus realizes stable and firm bonding regardless of the employment of the clamp means.

The above-described embodiments are just examples of the present invention, and therefore, it will be apparent for those skilled in the art that many modifications and variations may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention.

Claims

1. An ultrasonic sealing apparatus for fuse-bonding together with a pair of sheet-like members by frictional heat generated by ultrasonic vibration comprising:

- (a) horn means, having a contact surface in contact with one of said sheet-like members; and
- (b) anvil means having a contact surface in contact with the other sheet-like member, said anvil means being in confrontation with said horn means, said contact surfaces of said horn and anvil means being formed with grooves to provide a plurality of protrusions, each of said protrusions having flat upper surface and slant side surfaces, so that each of said protrusions has trapezoid shape in cross-section.

2. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said protrusions are arranged such that said grooves extent from one end to the other end of each of said contact surfaces in a zig-zag fashion.

3. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said pair of sheets have fuse-bonding surfaces, and at least one of said horn and anvil provides ultrasonic vibration in a direction oblique to said fuse-bonding surfaces.

4. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said pair of sheets have fuse-bonding surfaces, and at least one of said horn and anvil provides ultrasonic vibration in a direction parallel with said fuse-bonding surfaces.

5. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 2, wherein said flat upper surfaces are of honeycomb configuration.

6. An ultrasonic sealing apparatus for fuse-bonding a bottom portion of a tubular container formed of thermoplastic resin, said fuse-bonding being made by frictional heat generated by ultrasonic vibration, comprising:

- (a) horn means having a contact surface in contact with said bottom portion;
- (b) anvil means having a contact surface in contact with said bottom portion, said bottom portion being held between said horn and anvil means, and a position of said anvil means being displaceable relative to said horn means, said contact surface of said horn and anvil means being formed with grooves to provide a plurality of protrusions, each of said protrusions having flat upper surface and slant side surfaces so that each of said protrusions has trapezoid shape in cross-section; and

(c) conveyor means adopted to position said bottom portion between said horn and anvil means when these are opened.

7. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said grooves provide a bending pattern.

8. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said bottom portion of said tubular container has a fuse-bonding surface, and at least one of said horn and anvil means provides ultrasonic vibration in a direction oblique to said fuse-bonding surface.

9. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said bottom portion of said tubular container has a fuse-bonding surface, and at least one of said horn and anvil means provides ultrasonic vibration in a direction parallel with said fuse-bonding surface.

10. The apparatus as claimed in Claim 7, wherein said flat upper surfaces are of honeycomb configuration.

11. An ultrasonic sealing apparatus for fuse-bonding together two members by frictional heat generated by ultrasonic vibration between first and second contact surfaces of the apparatus arranged to receive therebetween and to contact, the two members to be fuse-bonded, the contact surfaces being formed with grooves to provide a plurality of protrusions, each of the protrusions having an upper surface and slant side surfaces so that each of the protrusions has substantially trapezoid shape in cross-section.

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FIG. 1

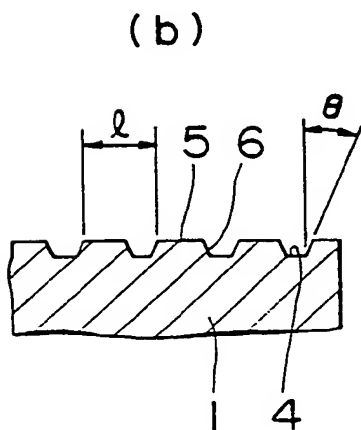
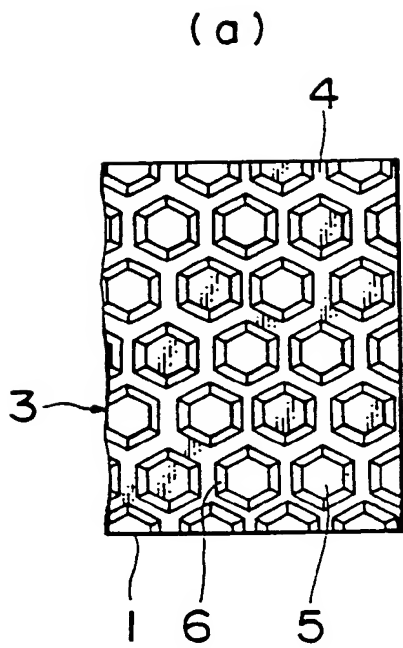


FIG. 3

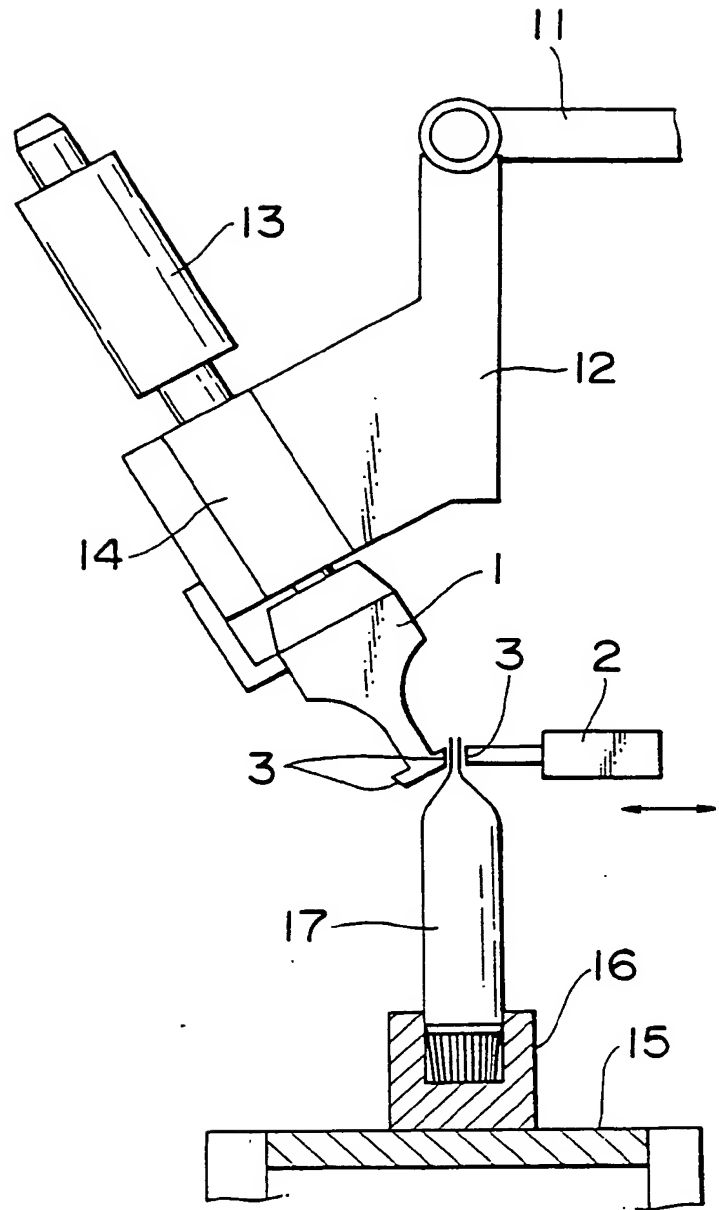


FIG.5

FIG.2

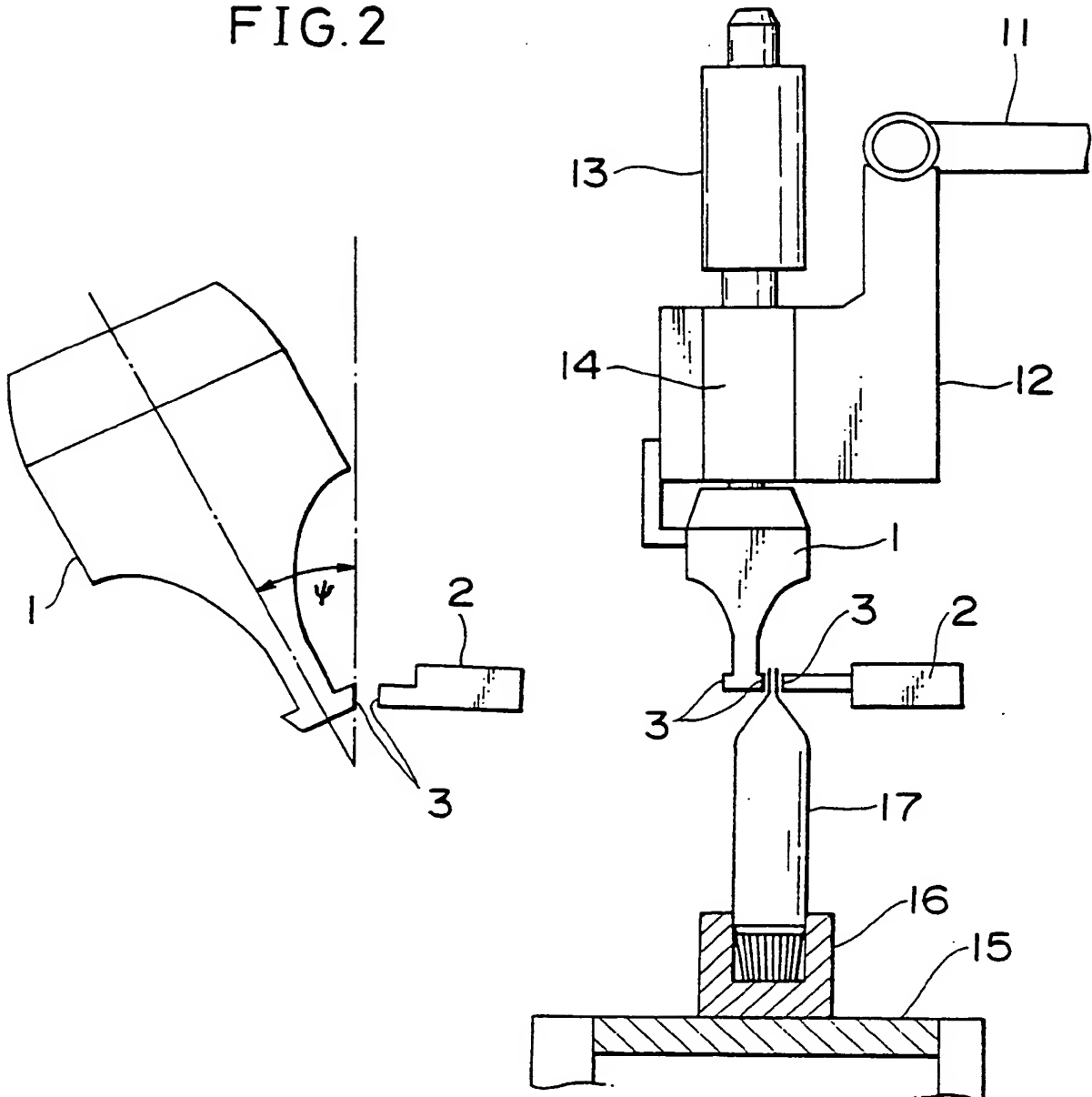


FIG. 4

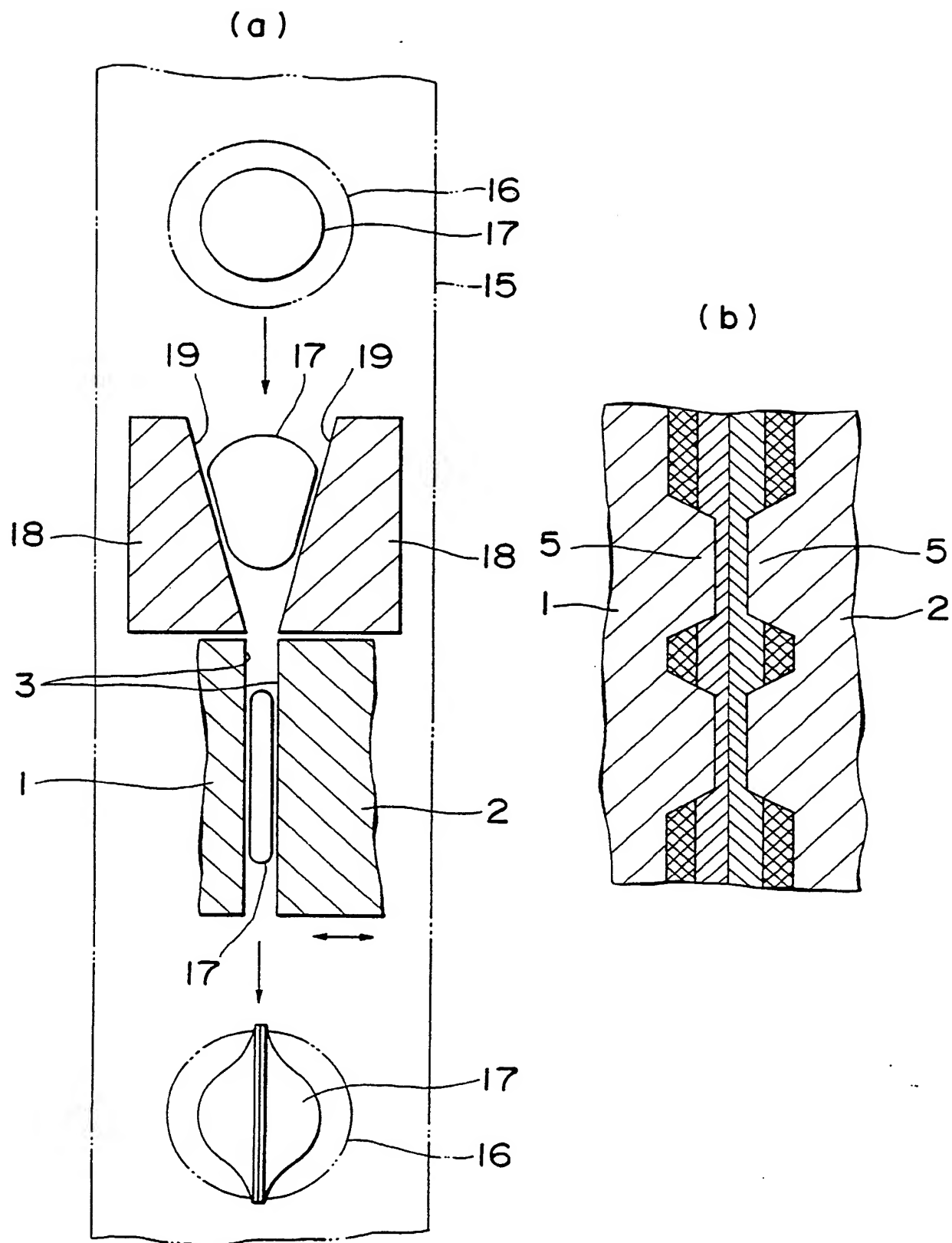


FIG. 6

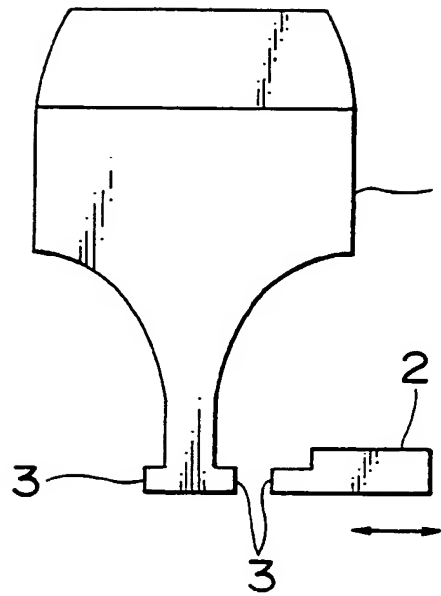


FIG. 7

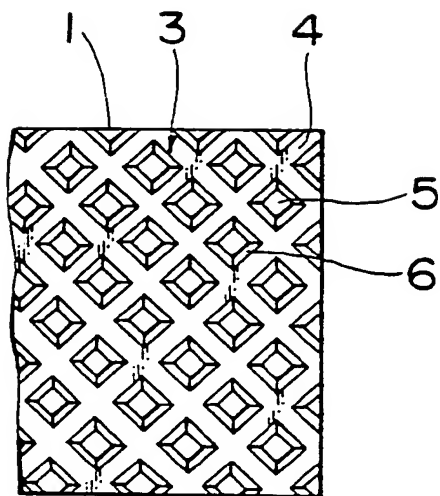


FIG. 8

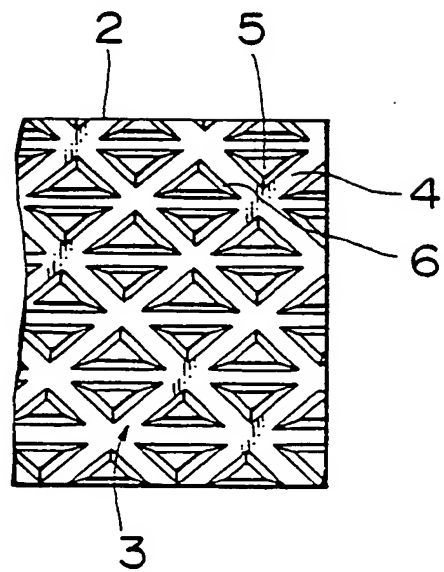


FIG. 9

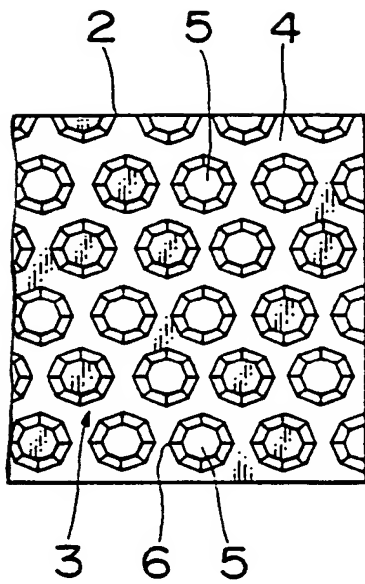


FIG. 10

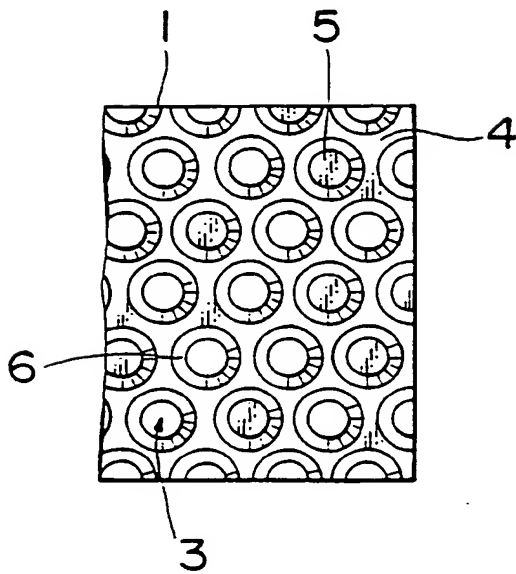
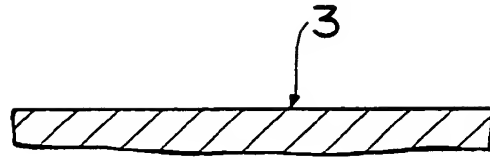
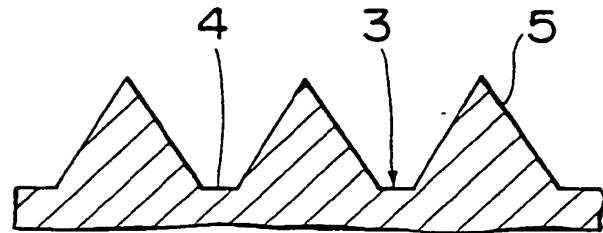


FIG. 11

(a)



(b)



(c)

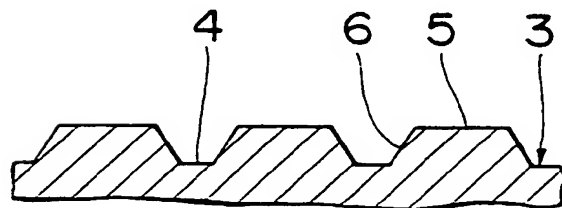


FIG.12

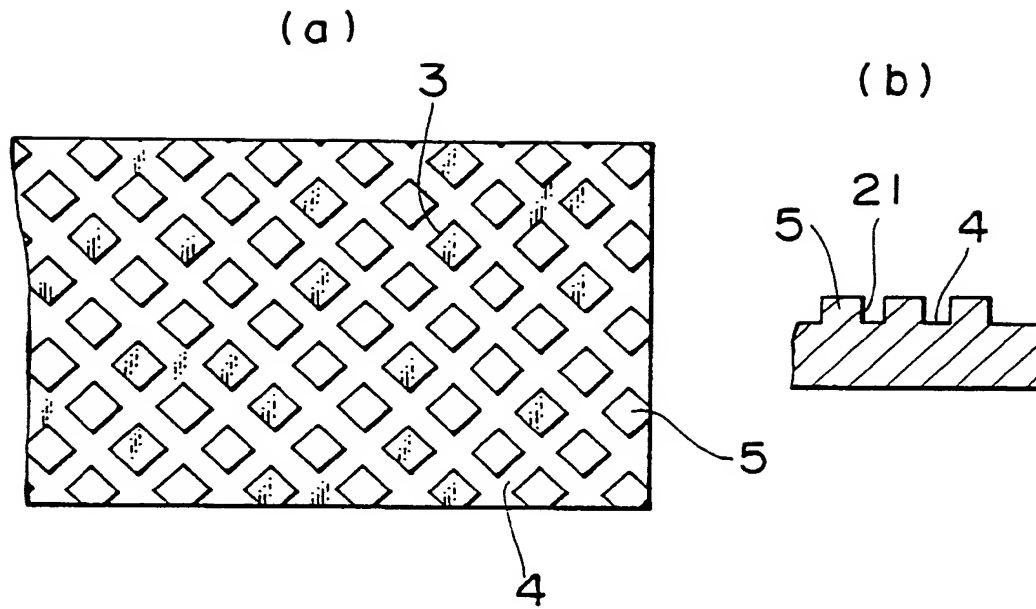
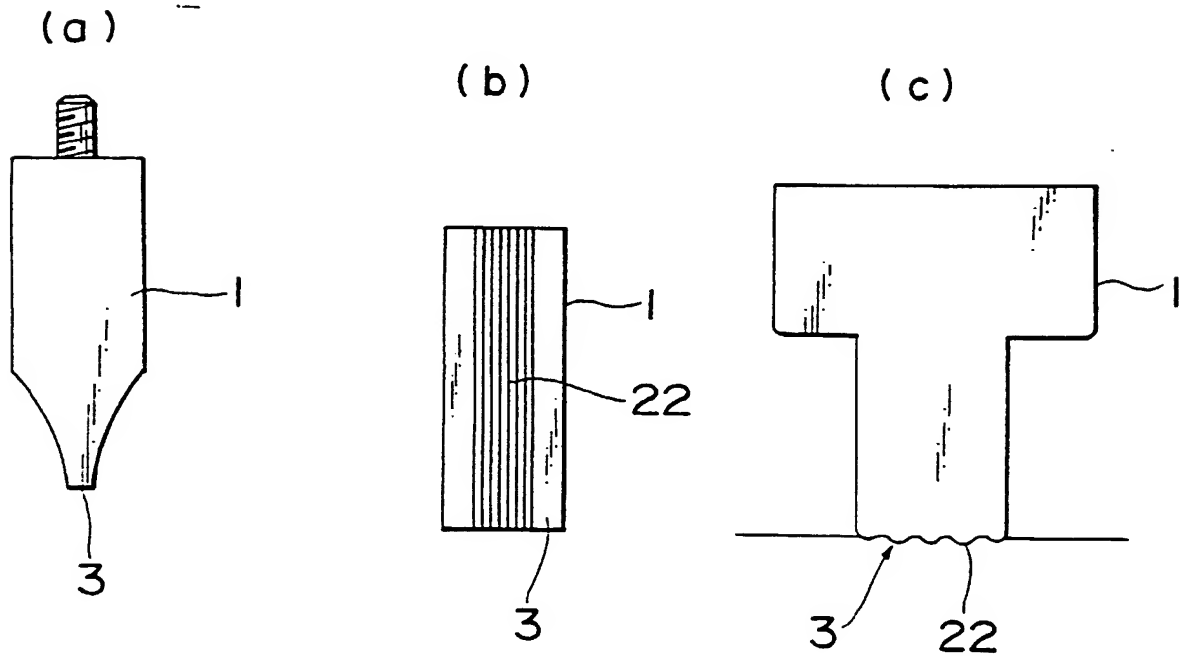


FIG.13



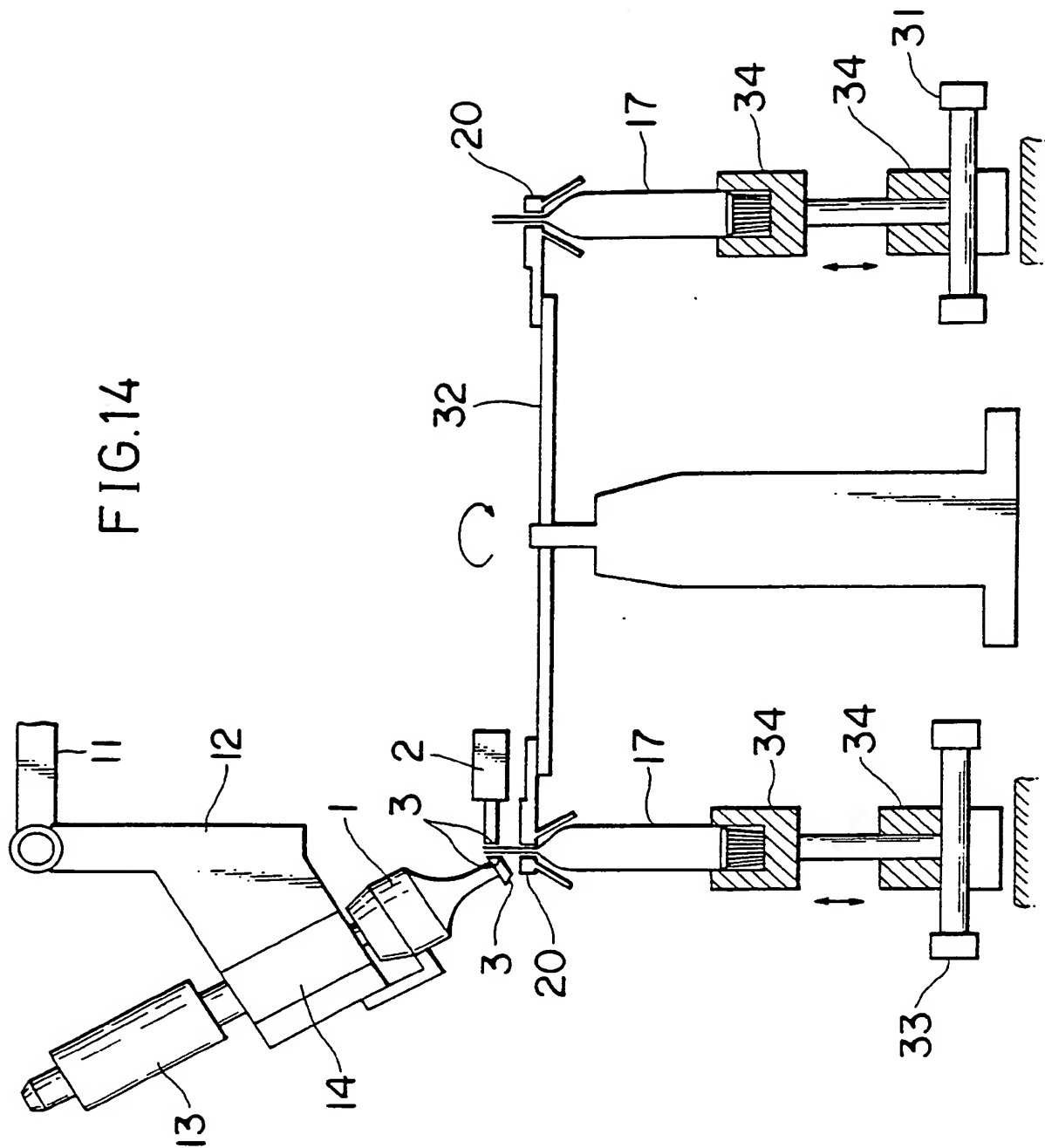


FIG.15

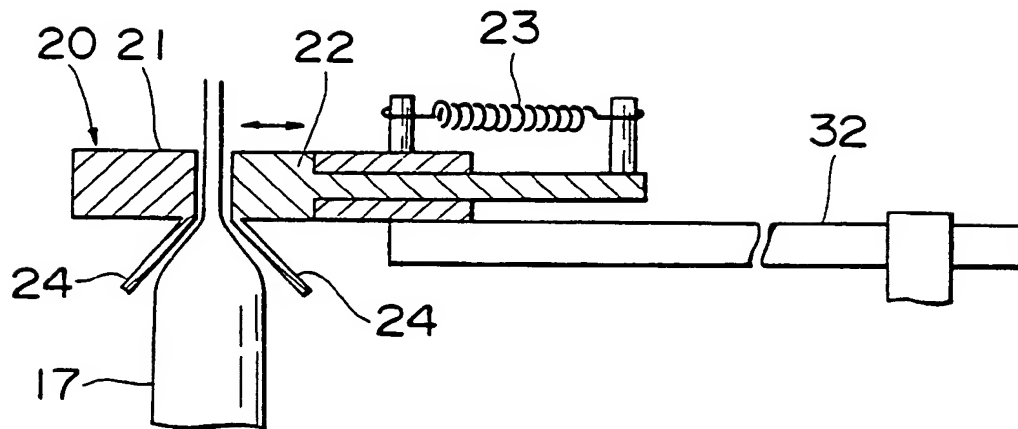


FIG.16

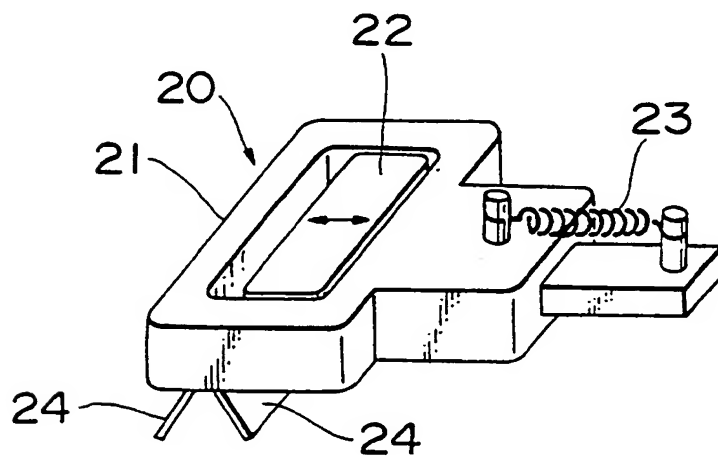
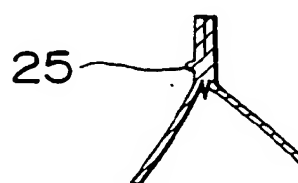
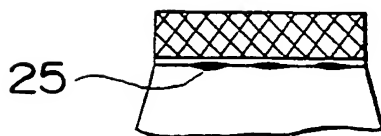


FIG.17

(a)

(b)



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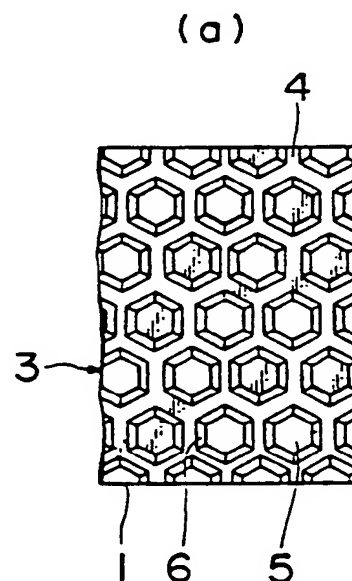
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54 Ultrasonic fuse-bonding sealing apparatus with improved contact surfaces.

57 An ultrasonic sealing apparatus is disclosed wherein a pair of sheet-like members or bottom portion of a tubular member is fuse-bonded together by frictional heat generated by the ultrasonic vibration. The apparatus includes horn (1) and anvil (2) means interposing members to be fuse-bonded together. The horn and anvil provide contact surfaces (3) in contact with the members to be fused. Each of the contact surfaces is formed with a plurality of grooves (4) to provide a plurality of protrusions (5). Each of the protrusions has a flat upper surface and slant side surfaces (6), so that the protrusion has a trapezoid cross-section. The horn means applies ultrasonic vibration to the fuse-bonding surface of the member to be fused in a direction oblique or parallel therewith in association with the anvil means.

FIG. 1



EP 0 242 480 A3



DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 4)
X	FR-A-2 084 015 (HITACHI) * Figures; claims; page 2, lines 30-31 *	1,2,5,7 ,10,11,	B 29 C 65/08
Y		3,4,6,8 -9	
D,Y	FR-A-2 510 937 (POLA CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES) * Whole document *	3,6,8	
A		1,11	
Y	US-A-3 426 951 (POHLMAN) * Claim 1; figure *	4,9	
A		1,11	
P,X	DD-A- 235 046 (VEB-BERGMANN-BORSIG) * Page 2, line 28 *	1,2,5,7 ,10,11 3,4,6,8 -9	B 29 C
Y			
Y	WO-A-7 900 972 (YOUNG) * Figures *	6	
Y	FR-A-2 366 996 (EX-CELL-O CORP.) * Figure 3 *	6	
A	DE-A-1 294 175 (HESSER) * Figures; claims *	1,2,5,7 ,10	
A	FR-A-2 507 531 (MECASONIC) * Figures 5,6 *	1,4	
		-/-	
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 12-09-1988	Examiner CORDENIER J.
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Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl. 4)
A	MODERN PACKAGING, vol. 34, no. 11, July 1961, pages 100-106, Butterheim Publ. Co., New York, US; "Ultrasonics" * Page 102, figures * ---	4,9	
A	FR-A-1 572 945 (STRUNK) * Figures * ---	6	
A	FR-A-2 067 838 (PAPETERIES CLEMENT CHUPJN) * Figures * ---	6	
L	EP-A-0 269 476 (I.C.C. SA) * Column 9, lines 30-41 * (priority) -----		
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl. 4)
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search THE HAGUE		Date of completion of the search 12-09-1988	Examiner CORDENIER J.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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